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ABSTRACT

Tenure and attrition rates within the Florida State University System (SUS) were studied. Attention was directed to attrition of newly hired tenure-earning faculty members who began employment at an SUS institution in either 1976, 1977, or 1978. Each faculty group was traced from date of hire through the seventh year of employment or until they left university employment. Data were analyzed by race and gender categories. Tenure rates at four-year institutions nationwide were between 65% and 70%, while the SUS tenure rate was 74% when only tenured or tenured-earning positions were used as the comparison population. Approximately 43% of newly hired, tenure-earning faculty had been granted tenure by their seventh year of employment. Male faculty had a higher tenure rate than female faculty: 46% compared to 32%. White faculty members had the highest tenure rate (45%), followed by "other minority" (32%), Black (27%), and Hispanic (25%). The rate at which faculty leave the institution does not appear to be related to a negative tenure decision, as over 32% of newly-hired faculty had left the university at the end of the third employment year. 10 references. (SW)

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LONGITUDINAL TENURE AND ATTRITION RATE STUDY IN THE STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA

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LONGITUDINAL TENURE AND ATTRITION RATE STUDY IN THE STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA

In 1985, at the request of the Governor of the State of Florida, the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission was directed to review tenure policies and practices within Florida's state universities and community colleges. Simultaneous to the Governor's directive, the Florida Board of Regents Office of Human Resources conducted a study of tenure and attrition rates within the Florida State University System (SUS). The study involved a review of the attrition of newly hired tenure-earning faculty members who began employment at an SUS institution in either 1976, 1977, or 1978. Each faculty group was traced from date of hire through the seventh year of employment or until they left university employment. Data were analyzed by race and gender categories. This paper presents the results of the SUS Tenure/Attrition Study.

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
TENURE AND ATTRITION RATE STUDY

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1985, the Florida Board of Regents (BOR) became interested in reviewing tenure, and tenure related issues, within the State University System (SUS). Specifically, the BOR was interested in determining whether the current SUS tenure system was becoming an obstacle to the recruitment of a highly qualified and diverse faculty. In examining this issue, the following questions were posed: 1) Are the SUS institutions becoming "tenured-in", thereby a) limiting the number of vacancies into which new faculty members could be placed, and b) restricting institutional flexibility with regard to changing academic needs and shifts in enrollment; 2) How many newly-hired tenure-track faculty members would eventually become tenured and would there be differences in tenure rates based upon race and sex; and, 3) Would the majority of turnover within this group be attributable primarily to a negative tenure decision (i.e. would the highest turnover occur during the fifth and sixth year of tenure-earning service rather than to a nonreappointment decision earlier in the employment period)?

In response to these questions and concerns, the BOR Office of Human Resources (OHR) began a Tenure and Attrition Rate Study. The OHR is responsible for developing SUS tenure policies and procedures, bargaining terms and conditions of employment, including tenure policies and procedures, with the faculty labor organization, reviewing grievances

concerning negative tenure decisions, and responding to requests for information regarding tenure policies and practices.

II. REVIEW OF TENURE ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The granting of tenure is significant to both the faculty member and the institution. For the faculty member, tenure affirms achievement of high quality past performance, promise for future achievement, and security from arbitrary dismissal. For the institution, it provides a nucleus of academic professionals who possess a strong professional commitment to the academic life of the institution and their academic discipline, as well as an occasion for the institution to carefully evaluate a faculty member's past performance and future promise in light of the institution's needs (OHR, 1984).

In recent years, tenure has been the focus of considerable debate. Numerous articles, essays, and reviews have examined the effects of tenure on the ability of an institution to attract and retain younger faculty, to meet affirmative action/equal employment opportunity goals, and to add or delete academic programs to meet changing curricular and/or enrollment needs (Blackburn, 1985; Bueche, 1983; Chair, 1984; Hefland, 1986; Mortimer, Bagshaw, and Masland, 1985). Further, the onset of "no growth" and decline in the early 1970's prompted a number of institutions/individuals to review university tenure rates (American Council on Education, 1981; Chait, 1984; Hefland, 1986; Mortimer et al; 1985).

A 1981 report by the American Council on Education on tenure practices at four-year institutions indicated that among full-time faculty members in all disciplines, 67.4% were tenured, with 25.5% holding appointments in tenure-track positions but not yet tenured. Further,

the average length of the probationary period was 5.6 years, with the overall tenure denial rate at just under 20%.

Hefland (1986), in an article in the Washington Monthly, reported that nationally, two-thirds of all full-time faculty slots were filled by tenured professors, with many top institutions, including Wisconsin, Berkeley, Stanford, and Duke, having even higher tenure rates. Similarly, a 1986 study by NCES reported tenure rates for universities and four-year colleges to be 68.2%.

Finally, Mortimer, Bagshaw, and Masland (1985), in their monograph Flexibility in Academic Staffing, reported slightly lower tenure rates, indicating that just under 60% of all full-time faculty were tenured. Chait and Ford (1982) and El-Khawas and Furniss (1974) also reported national tenure rates at just under 60%.

For the last decade, colleges and universities have been operating under intense conditions of scarce resources and environmental uncertainty (Mortimer et al, 1985). Considering that the institutional commitment to the tenured faculty member may be of 20- to 30-years' duration, amounting to over a million-dollars, college and university administrators should be attentive to institutional tenure rates. Careful planning and management of faculty personnel systems must be a high priority in order to ensure a balance between young, junior faculty and a stable core of tenured senior faculty. A tenure and attrition rate study can assist college and university administrators to plan and manage resources more effectively.

III. OVERVIEW OF SUS TENURE AND ATTRITION RATE STUDY

The SUS Tenure and Attrition Rate Study is presented in two parts. Part I is a review of tenure rates, by university and Systemwide, for the 1984-85 academic year. Part II is a review of longitudinal data relative to tenure and turnover rates for faculty members hired into the SUS in 1976, 1977, 1978.

The SUS database--its Authorized Position File--was used to identify the appropriate population for review. This database is updated once each year, usually in late Fall. Although this "snapshot" data is somewhat limiting for many purposes, changes in faculty tenure status generally occur on an annual cycle so the limitations of the population data were considered minor for this study.

A. PART I - SUS/UNIVERSITY TENURE RATES, 1984-85

1. Methodology

Part I involved a review of tenure rates, by university and Systemwide, for the 1984-85 academic year. For each university, two tenure rates were calculated. The first university tenure rate was derived by comparing only the number of faculty eligible for tenure to the number of tenured faculty. As a result, approximately 21% of the faculty members within the General Faculty classification plan were eliminated from consideration, as they were <u>not</u> tenure-eligible. Positions which are not tenure-eligible but which are classified as General Faculty include classification titles such as Instructor, Lecturer, Program Director, Engineer, Research Associate, and County Agent.

The second university tenure rate was derived by comparing all General Faculty positions to the number of tenured faculty.

Two Systemwide tenure rates were also calculated. Systemwide tenure rates were computed by comparing the total number of SUS faculty eligible for tenure to the number of tenured faculty and by comparing the total General Faculty population to the number of tenured faculty.

2. RESULTS

University*	Tenure Rate(1)	Tenure Rate(2)
A	62%	47%
B	62%	45%
C	69%	52%
D	69%	53%
E	72%	62%
F	73%	59%
G	75%	66%
H	78%	60%
I	84%	67%
SYSTEMWIDE	74%	59%

* A list of SUS institutions is included at the end of the report.

(1) Tenure rates based upon the total number of positions designated as tenured or tenure-earning during 1984-85. As described above, these positions represent approximately 79% of all positions designated as General Faculty.

(2) Total General Faculty classification plan used as the comparison population.

A review of the table [Column (1)] indicates that the tenure rates of Florida's state universities, in 1984-85, ranged from a low of 62% to a high of 84%, with an average tenure rate of 74%. Four of nine universities had tenure rates of 70% or below; seven of nine universities had tenure rates of 75% or below. Finally, similar tenure rates were recorded for the three largest state universities, all Category I institutions (Doctoral level) as defined by the American Association of University Professors.

When the total General Faculty population is used as the comparison population, the tenure rates decrease considerably. A review of the table [Column (2)] indicates that the tenure rates of Florida's state universities, in 1984-85, ranged from a low of 47% to a high of 67%, with an average tenure rate of 59%. Four of nine universities had tenure rates of 55% or below; seven of nine universities had tenure rates of 65% or below.

3. Discussion

A review of the SUS tenure rates compared to national data indicates that SUS tenure rates are in line with national figures. Studies by ACE (1981) and HEGIS (1985) reported tenure rates in four-year public institutions to be between 65-70%. Similarly, Hefland (1986) reported that two-thirds of all full-time faculty slots were filled by tenured professors, with a number of universities possessing tenure rates upwards of 75%. The System tenure rates of 74%, when only tenured or tenure-earning positions are used as the comparison population, and 59%, when the General Faculty population is used as the comparison population, are consistent with these national figures.

One caveat is noted when comparing the SUS tenure rates to tenure rates nationally. The faculty populations included in the national studies were not specifically defined. Considering that the populations may differ, it is difficult to be definitive regarding the conclusions that can be drawn when comparing SUS tenure rates to national figures.

B. PART II - LONGITUDINAL TENURE AND ATTRITION RATE STUDY

1. Methodology

Three faculty groups were examined relative to tenure and attrition over a seven year period. Faculty members identified for the longitudinal study were newly-hired faculty receiving initial appointments on tenured or tenure-earning lines in either 1976, 1977, or 1978. Since the decision to tenure a faculty member is normally made by the sixth year of full-time employment, each faculty group was traced from date of hire through the seventh year of employment or until they left university employment, whichever was earlier within the seven year period examined. Data provided for each employment year reflect those tenure or other personnel decisions (i.e., resignation, non-reappointments, transfers, deaths) made at any time during the previous academic year because the file from which the data are drawn is updated only once each year, usually during the Fall semester.

The following research questions served as a guide for addressing the questions and concerns outlined by the BOR.

1) What percent of faculty will become tenured over a seven year period? Are there differences by race and sex?

2) Will the majority of faculty members be tenured in the fifth or sixth year of employment?

3) What percent of faculty will leave university employment over a seven year period and when will the majority of this turnover occur? Are there differences by race and sex?

4) Will turnover coincide with a negative tenure decision (i.e., will most turnover occur during the fifth or sixth year)?

2. Results/Discussion

The results of the analysis are provided in Appendix B, Tables 1-3 and contain the tenure and attrition rates for faculty hired into the SUS during 1976, 1977, and 1978.

1) What percent of faculty will become tenured over a seven year period? Are there differences by race and sex?

The data contained in Table 1 show that approximately 43% of newly hired, tenure-earning faculty had been granted tenure by their seventh year of employment. When analyzed by sex, the data indicate that male faculty had a higher tenure rate than female faculty: 46% compared to 32%. When analyzed by race, White faculty members had the highest tenure rate (45%), followed by Other Minority (32%), Black (27%), and Hispanic (25%).

2) Will the majority of faculty members be tenured in the fifth or sixth year of employment?

The data contained in Table 2 shows that by the sixth employment year, 40% of the newly-hired tenure-earning faculty had been awarded tenure. By the seventh employment year, the percentage increases slightly (+3%). As expected, the largest increase in the number of faculty members tenured (+21%) occurred in the fifth year of employment. No significant differences were noted when data was analyzed by race and sex.

3) What percent of faculty will leave university employment over a seven year period? Are there differences by race and sex?

The average attrition rate, which represents resignations, non-reappointments, terminations, transfers, and deaths, for the three population groups was 49% (see Table 3). An analysis by sex shows that female faculty members had a slightly higher attrition rate than their male counterparts; 54% compared to 47%. When data are analyzed by race, Blacks had the highest attrition rate (62%), followed by Other Minority (60%), Hispanic (50%), and White (47%).

4) Will turnover coincide with a negative tenure decision (i.e., will most turnover occur during the fifth or sixth year)?

Most turnover did not occur during the fifth or sixth employment year. A review of Table 3 indicates that the highest attrition rate for the total population occurs after the first year of employment (16%) and then remains relatively steady after the second, third and fourth years (8%, 8% and

6% respectively). An additional 4% dropped out after the fifth employment year.

For the most part, this trend was evidenced when data are analyzed by race and sex. Males, females, blacks and whites recorded the highest level of attrition after the first year of employment, with females recording the highest attrition rate after one year of employment (23%). Hispanics and blacks recorded their highest attrition rates at the end of the second year of employment.

If a decision to deny tenure to a faculty member is the primary reason for attrition, one could assume that the highest rate of attrition will be recorded in the sixth or seventh employment year. The survey data did not support this hypothesis. Although this data is far from conclusive, in that no termination reasons are recorded, it does not appear that attrition is necessarily involuntary (i.e. faculty are not leaving due to a negative tenure decision). Faculty appear to be making decisions to leave the university quite early.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Concern that the SUS institutions were becoming "tenured-in" was not substantiated by the data obtained in the Tenure and Attrition Rate Study. The state universities have maintained relatively moderate tenure rates, with most tenure rates at or below national averages.

The tenure and attrition rate data, although limited in scope, did reveal some interesting results. Essentially, from each new group of faculty

members hired, slightly less than one-half will become tenured at the institution into which they were hired. Also, the rate at which faculty leave the institution does not appear to be related to a negative tenure decision, as over 32% of newly-hired faculty had left the university at the end of the third employment year. Significantly higher rates of early turnover are noted for female faculty and some minority groups.

The recruitment and retention of qualified faculty members may be aided by further study of attrition rates and the causal differences among the various faculty categories. This is especially important at newer institutions or those experiencing accelerated growth.

May 1987
JC/pp.003

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JC/pp.003

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA

		Enrollment	Faculty Headcount
FAMU	Florida A&M University, Tallahaseee	5,396	479
FAU	Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton	10,227	495
FIU	Florida International University, Miami	16,438	647
FSU	Florida State University, Tallahassee	23,138	1,397
UCF	University of Central Florida, Orlando	16,444	650
UF	University of Florida, Gainesville	34,782	3,114
UNF	University of North Florida, Jacksonville	6,737	284
USF	University of South Florida, Tampa	29,458	1,592
UWF	University of West Florida, Pensacola	6,243	292

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TABLE 3
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
Summary of Faculty Attrition Rates by Employment Year
By Race and Sex Categories

	Total hired in Employment Year #1	Employment Year #2	Employment Year #3	Employment Year #4	Employment Year #5	Employment Year #6	Employment Year #7
SUS Total	819 (100%)	131 (16%)	198 (24%)	266 (32%)	311 (38%)	347 (42%)	398 (49%)
By Sex							
Male	628 (100%)	87 (14%)	131 (21%)	186 (30%)	224 (36%)	256 (41%)	295 (47%)
Female	191 (100%)	44 (23%)	67 (35%)	80 (42%)	87 (46%)	91 (48%)	103 (54%)
By Race							
Black	55 (100%)	8 (15%)	15 (27%)	23 (42%)	28 (51%)	31 (55%)	34 (62%)
White	723 (100%)	120 (17%)	170 (24%)	227 (31%)	262 (36%)	293 (41%)	341 (47%)
Hispanic	16 (100%)	1 (6%)	3 (19%)	5 (31%)	6 (38%)	8 (50%)	8 (50%)
Other Minority	25 (100%)	2 (8%)	10 (40%)	11 (44%)	15 (60%)	15 (60%)	15 (60%)

* Percentages (other than those <1%) rounded to nearest whole number.

Source: State University System Authorized Position File.

TABLE 2
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
Summary of Faculty Tenure Rates by Employment Year

	Total hired in Employment Year #1	Employment Year #2	Employment Year #3	Employment Year #4	Employment Year #5	Employment Year #6	Employment Year #7
SUS Total	819 (100%)	21 (3%)	60 (7%)	122 (15%)	153 (19%)	330 (40%)	349 (43%)
By Sex							
Male	628 (100%)	20 (3%)	57 (9%)	107 (17%)	134 (21%)	273 (43%)	288 (46%)
Female	191 (100%)	1 (.5%)	3 (2%)	15 (8%)	19 (10%)	57 (30%)	61 (32%)
By Race							
Black	55 (100%)	0 --	0 --	2 (4%)	3 (5%)	13 (24%)	15 (27%)
White	723 (100%)	20 (3%)	58 (8%)	117 (16%)	145 (20%)	303 (42%)	322 (45%)
Hispanic	16 (100%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	6 (38%)	4 (25%)
Other Minority	25 (100%)	0 --	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	4 (16)%	8 (32%)	8 (32%)

* Percentages (other than those <1%) rounded to nearest whole number.

Source: State University System Authorized Position File.

TABLE 1
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
Summary of Faculty Tenure and Attrition Activity Over a 7 Year Period

	Faculty Hired 1976		Faculty Hired 1977		Faculty Hired 1978		Faculty Hired 1976, 1977, 1978	
By Race								
Black								
Hired	12	(100%)	25	(100%)	18	(100%)	55	(100%)
Tenured	4	(33%)	6	(24%)	4	(22%)	14	(27%)
Attrition	8	(66%)	15	(60%)	11	(61%)	34	(62%)
White								
Hired	264	(100%)	275	(100%)	184	(100%)	723	(100%)
Tenured	108	(41%)	134	(49%)	80	(43%)	322	(45%)
Attrition	135	(51%)	125	(45%)	81	(44%)	341	(47%)
Hispanic								
Hired	5	(100%)	7	(100%)	5	(100%)	17	(100%)
Tenured	1	(20%)	2	(29%)	1	(20%)	4	(25%)
Attrition	4	(80%)	3	(43%)	1	(20%)	8	(47%)
Other								
Hired	9	(100%)	9	(100%)	7	(100%)	25	(100%)
Tenured	4	(44%)	4	(44%)	0	--	8	(32%)
Attrition	5	(56%)	5	(56%)	5	(71%)	15	(60%)

* Percentages rounded to nearest whole number

Source: State University System Authorized Position File

TABLE 1
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
Summary of Faculty Tenure and Attrition Activity Over a 7 Year Period

	Faculty Population 1976		Faculty Population 1977		Faculty Population 1978		Faculty Population 1976, 1977, 1978	
SUS Total								
# Hired	290	(100%)	315	(100%)	214	(100%)	819	(100%)
# Tenured	117	(40%)	147	(47%)	85	(40%)	349	(43%)
# Attrition	152	(52%)	148	(47%)	98	(46%)	398	(49%)
By Sex								
Male								
Hired	229	(100%)	245	(100%)	154	(100%)	626	(100%)
Tenured	94	(41%)	125	(51%)	69	(45%)	288	(46%)
Attrition	121	(53%)	109	(44%)	65	(42%)	295	(47%)
Female								
Hired	61	(100%)	70	(100%)	60	(100%)	191	(100%)
Tenured	23	(38%)	22	(31%)	16	(27%)	61	(32%)
Attrition	31	(51%)	39	(56%)	33	(55%)	103	(54%)

* Percentages rounded to nearest whole number

Source: State University System Authorized Position File

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